

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-10 EURE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04

H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 ACDA-05 SAJ-01 OMB-01 SAM-01 /077 W

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P R 141420Z AUG 75

FM AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8648

INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY BERLIN

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, CZ

SUBJECT: REPRESENTATION ON NYTIMES EDITORIAL

1. DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER VEJVODA (FILLING IN FOR
VACATIONING RUZEK WHO NORMALLY HANDLES US AFFAIRS)
CALLED IN CHARGE AUG 14 TO MAKE ORAL REPRESENTATION
CONCERNING NEW YORK TIMES EDITORIAL OF AUG 12,
"NORMALIZED" PRAGUE."

2. VEJVODA, WHO HAS SERVED MANY YEARS AT UN AND KNOWS
US WELL, MADE A CIVILIZED KIND OF PROTESTATION. HE
SAID THAT CZECHOSLOVAKS WERE ACCUSTOMED TO NEGATIVE
ARTICLES IN THE WESTERN PRESS, AND LIVED WITH THEM;
BUT THIS EDITORIAL WAS AN OUTRAGE, PARTICULARLY WHEN
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IT CHARACTERIZED THEIR PRESIDENT AS A "SOVIET

GAULEITER." VEJVODA SAID THAT SPEAKING ON BEHALF OF HIS GOVERNMENT, HE ASKED THAT WE TRANSMIT THEIR SERIOUS DISSATISFACTION WITH THIS EDITORIAL. HE ASKED SPECIFICALLY THAT THE GOC REPRESENTATION BE CALLED TO THE ATTENTION OF THE SECRETARY.

3. DISCUSSING THE EDITORIAL, VEJVODA SAID HE DID NOT BELIEVE IT WAS TRUE THAT CZECHOSLOVAKIA "TURNED OUT THE MOST HEAVY-HANDED ANTI-AMERICAN PROPAGANDA IN EUROPE." SPECIFICALLY, HE THOUGHT IT UNTRUE THAT THE CZECH PRESS AHD EVER CALLED EISENHOWER A COLLABORATOR OR PAINTED HIM IN THAT LIGHT, AND HE FELT SUCH AN UNTRUTH WAS AN INCITEMENT TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE. VEJVODA SIAD HE RECOGNIZED THAT THE EDITORIAL WAS DIRECTED NOT ONLY AGAINST CZECHOSLOVAKIA, BUT AGAINST ASPECTS OF US DETENTE POLICY; BUT OF COURSE THE GOC HAD TO BE CONCERNED ABOUT THE ATTACKS UPON ITSELF.

4. SPEAKING OF US-CSSR RELATIONS, VEJVODA SAID HIS AUTHORITIES HAD BEEN HAPPY AT THE OUTCOME OF THE TALK FOREIGN MINISTER CHNOUPEK HAD HAD WITH THE SECRETARY IN HELSINKI, AND FELT THAT BILATERAL RELATIONS WERE GETTING BACK ON AN UPWARD TRACK. HOWEVER, SUCH EDITORIALS AS THIS COULD PUT A BRAKE UPON DEVELOPING RELATIONS. REFERRING TO HELSINKI FURTHER, VEJVODA SAID HE RECOGNIZED THAT THE EDITORIAL WAS IN PART AN ATTACK UPON CSCE; HE THOUGHT THAT PRESIDENT FORD HAD DESCRIBED THE AIMS IF DETENTE BETTER THAN HE POSSIBLE COULD, AND HE FULLY ACCEPTED THE PRESIDENT'S STATEMENT OF THE OBJECTIVES AND MEANING OF CSCE. BUT RESTRAIN WAS NEEDED IN THE PRESS, EVEN IF THERE WAS DISAGREEMENT OVER HELSINKI: THE CZECHOSLOVAKS DID NOT EXPECT PRAISE FROM THE TIMES, BUT THEY HOPED FOR RESTRAINT, AND ABSTENTION FROM APPLYING PEJORATIVES TO NATIONAL LEADERS.

5. IN CONCLUSION, VEJVODA ASKED THAT THE USG BE INFORMED OF THE GREAT BITTERNESS IN PRAGUE OVER SUCH AN EDITORIAL. DISCUSSING THE RELATIONSHIP OF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THE USG WITH THE AMERICAN PRESS IN SOPHISTICATED TERMS, VEJVODA SAID HE KNEW THE USG WAS LIMITED IN WHAT IT COULD DO TO AFFECT THE PRESS OUTPUT; BUT HE HOPED WE WOULD DO WHAT WE COULD TO TRY TO IMPROVE THE BITTER TASTE LEFT BY THIS EDITORIAL. HE SAID SUCH THINGS SHOULD CEASE IN THE NAME OF BETTER RELATIONS BETWEEN OUR COUNTRIES.

6. CHARGE REPLIED THAT HE PERSONALLY HAD BEEN DISTRESSED AT THE EDITORIAL AND HAD INFORMED THE DEPARTMENT OF THE EMBASSY'S DISAGREEMENT WITH THE POINT OF VIEW EXPRESSED. CHARGE ADDED THAT HE DEPLORED THE APPLICATION OF PEJORATIVES TO THE PRESIDENT. CHARGE SAID THAT VEJVODA WAS RIGHT, THE EDITORIAL WAS NOT MERELY AN ATTACK UPON CZECHOSLOVAKIA BUT ALSO AN ATTACK ON IMPORTANT ASPECTS OF THE US GOVERNMENT'S POLICY TOWARD USSR AND EASTERN EUROPE. THE USG DID NOT AGREE WITH THE VIEWPOINT OF THE EDITORIAL, AS HE KNEW. CHARGE SAID HE WAS HAPPY THAT VEJVODA UNDERSTOOD HOW THE PRESS WORKED IN OUR COUNTRY, AND THEREFORE UNDERSTOOD WHY THERE WAS LITTLE WE COULD DO TO AFFECT THE TIMES' EDITORIAL POLICY. (VEJVODA INTERJECTED THAT HE UNDERSTOOD THIS, BUT IT WAS NOT EASY TO EXPLAIN TO HIS SUPERIORS IN THE PARTY. HHE HAD A DIFFICULT CONVERSATION WITH A HIGH OFFICIAL AUG 13 IN WHICH HE HAD TO DEFEND PROPOSITION THAT IT WAS NOT USG WHICH HAD INSPIRED THE EDITORIAL.) CHARGE CONCLUDED THAT HE WOULD TRANSMIT VEJVODA'S MESSAGE TO WASHINGTON, AND ADDED THAT WE TOO HAD BEEN PLEASED AT SOME UPTURN RECENTLY IN BILATERAL RELATIONS, AND SHOULD NOT LET SUCH THINGS AS THIS EDITORIAL KEEP US FROM WORKING TOWARDS MORE NORMAL RELATIONS.

PERRY

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: GOVERNMENT REACTION, PRESS COMMENTS, DETENTE
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 14 AUG 1975
Decapton Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decapton Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ElyME
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975PRAGUE02064
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750281-0490
From: PRAGUE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750852/aaaabtxq.tel
Line Count: 141
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ElyME
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 02 MAY 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <02 MAY 2003 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <01 OCT 2003 by ElyME>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: REPRESENTATION ON NYTIMES EDITORIAL
TAGS: PFOR, CZ, NEW YORK TIMES, (VEVODA)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006